



EARLY CIVILISATIONS OF THE AMERICAS

Mayas, Aztecs and Incas



Chapter 3 of your text book, “Medieval Times.....”

Guiding questions

These are questions that you will begin to find answers to as you explore the early civilizations of the Americas in your research for this unit.

Q. What types of governments were formed in these civilizations?

Q. What was the pattern of day-to-day life in these societies?

Q. How did each society organize its economic activities?

TASK 1. All subgroups: Study the map and image on pages 60 & 61 of your text book.

Answer these questions in complete sentences in your notebooks....
(use the heading on this sheet before you begin, underline it with a ruler and put today's date).

- 1) Look at the structure in the photograph on pages 60 and 61. What does it tell us about the past?**

(Think back to similar questions and ideas from previous units of study in both year 7 & year 8)

- 2) Study the map on page 61 and read the text in the box under the subheading “Regions”.**

a) IDENTIFY: Which two civilizations were located in Middle America?

b) PREDICT: Note the end dates for these two civilizations. What might have contributed to their ending?

South America and the Incas

Area of Interaction – Environments

TASK No.1: READ Chapter 3, Section , pages 62-71 of your text book

TASK No.2: WRITE the heading on this sheet into your notebook, underline it and answer these questions once you have read the section.

- Q. Were the Incas the first culture to develop in the Americas? How long had other groups lived in the region before Incan culture developed?
- Q. How might geography affect the kinds of homes people build?
- Q. Describe the climates of the Americas (both North and South).
- Q. Study the map on page 63 and compare it to the one on page 61. What is the physical geography of the area in which the Incas lived?
- Q. Which two river systems in the Americas are among the largest in the world?
- Q. How might the people who lived in these regions have adapted to their geography and climate?
- Q. What was the capital of the Incan empire? Where was it located? When was it built? Use compass directions to describe its location.
- Q. How did the Incas extend their control of the region? Q, How much land did the Incan empire cover at the greatest extent?
- Q. Describe the role of the Incan emperor and how he organized his empire.
- Q. What is a census?
- Q. What was the purpose of the Incan census?
- Q. What was a quipu?
- Q. How do you think quipus helped to unify the Incan empire?
- Q. What do you think were the major problems of keeping such a large empire running smoothly? Explain your answer.
- Q. How did the Incas use stone to increase farm production?
- Q. Read the box on page 66 “Links Across Time”. How do you think bridges helped spread information across the Incan empire?
- Q. What problems helped trigger the fall of the Incan empire before the Spanish arrived?

TASK No.3: Study the information on pages 68 & 69. Do the task entitled “Practice the Skill “on page 69 to look for causes and effects.

Cultures of Middle America

Area of Interaction – Environments

TASK No. 1: READ section 2.

TASK No. 2: WRITE the heading on your sheet into your notebook and underline it.

Answer these questions in complete sentences:

Q. What were two cultures that thrived in Middle America long before the Aztecs?

Q. What was Mayan life based on?

Q. Describe, in your own words, the technique of *slash-and-burn* agriculture.

Q. Why do you think the Mayas worshipped a god of corn, god of rain and a god of sun?

Q. Describe the role of religion in Mayan culture.

Q. Describe common structures found in a Mayan city.

Q. List the possible reasons that Mayans abandoned their cities.

Q. What was the name of the capital city of the Aztecs, when was it built and where was it located?

Q. What was the extent of the Aztec empire? (use compass directions)

Q. How did the Aztec emperor benefit from his conquests?

Q. Name two challenges that faced the Aztecs in Tenochtitlan. How did the Aztecs meet these challenges?

Q. Why might the Aztec civilization be described as war-like? How did the Aztecs treat the peoples they conquered in war?

Q. What was the largest class in Aztec society and why do you think this was so?

Q. What does the worship of gods and goddesses such as those worshipped by the Aztecs tell you about Aztec society?

READ pages 76 & 77 about the Great Temple.

Q. When did the Spanish explorers invade the Aztec empire?

Q. Why might some of the peoples conquered by the Aztecs have wanted to overthrow the emperor?

Q. Why do you think diseases brought by the Spanish explorers killed so many Aztecs?

TASK No.3: COMPARE & CONTRAST. Write a paragraph comparing how the Mayan and Aztec cultures were similar and how they were different.

